

USSN: 10/693,263
Art Unit: 3682

07/10/2007 AMENDMENT
Page: 5 of 7

REMARKS

1. No Fee for Claims

The number of total claims, the number of independent claims and the number of dependent claims are unchanged. There are no multiple dependent claims. No fee for claims is required.

2. Request for Entry of AMENDMENT

This AMENDMENT makes a single change. Specifically, in claim 2, paragraph (e), line 13, "physically close" is deleted and replaced by --proximate--. In as-filed Figures 71 and 72 collar 536 of the thread follower 532 is depicted proximate to handle member 530. No new matter is involved in the amendment of claim 2.

The rejection which necessitated the change herein was made for the first time in the immediately preceding Office action, dated 03/16/2007. The change reduces an issue and is thought to place the application in condition for allowance or in better condition for appeal. The change is thought not to require additional search or to raise additional issues or to otherwise require substantial effort on the part of the examiner.

Entry of this Amendment is requested

3. Request for Withdrawal of Rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112

The present Office Action rejected claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, the examiner took the position that "close to" in paragraph (e) of claim 2 is a relative term which renders the claim indefinite.

As indicated above, in claim 2, paragraph (e), line 13, the phrase "physically close" is replaced by --proximate--.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112 are requested.

USSN: 10/693,263
Art Unit: 3682

07/10/2007 AMENDMENT
Page: 6 of 7

4. Request for Withdrawal of Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102(b)

Independent claims 1, 2 and 3 and dependent claim 6/3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by US patent no. 4,759,398 to Renee ("Renee" or "Renee '398").

The present application discloses a control rod mechanism 520 which, as claimed, has the capability to effect repeated, relatively short up and down strokes of a handle device 526 to move an associated load such as a window blind a relatively long distance in different directions. The handle device 526 comprises a follower 532 and a handle 530 that is rotatably captured to the follower, or vice versa, with an exposed collar 536 of the follower extending from one end of the handle. Gripping the collar 536 and moving the handle device 526 up or down forces rotation of the rod or wand 522 and moves the associated blind up or down. Releasing the collar 536 during the opposite, down or up stroke of the handle device 526, causes the follower 532 to rotate around the rod without rotating the rod, so that the handle device can be repositioned along the rod for another blind-moving stroke.

Independent claims 1, 2 and 3 describe the above rotatable follower and handle combination with different levels of detail. Claim 1 specifies a control rod mechanism which includes a spiral thread follower mounted on a rod; and a handle which is mounted over the follower for rotating about the follower and which has a section exposed relative to the handle for permitting selective gripping of the follower. Claim 2 specifies a control rod mechanism comprising a handle rotatably captured to a follower which in turn is rotatably mounted on a rod and has an exposed collar proximate the handle. The control rod mechanism defined in claim 3 comprises a stepped cylinder which has a relatively small diameter tube and a relatively large diameter collar; and a handle which has a bore rotatably mounting the tube therein with the collar protruding from and rotatably seated along an end of the handle.

Renee discloses a handle mechanism which is used to tilt the slats of a venetian blind in opposite directions, by moving an associated handle up or down. The embodiments disclosed in Figs. 1-4, 5-8, 12-14 and 15-17 do not appear to be relevant to applicant's invention, and the examiner has not relied upon these four embodiments.

Figs. 9-11 of Renee disclose an embodiment, comprising body 50 and sleeve 57, which the examiner relies upon in each of the rejections of claims 1, 2, 3 and 6/3. The examiner takes the position that body 50 and sleeve 57 rotate relative to one another. This interpretation and the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) are traversed, for at least the reasons discussed herein.

USSN: 10/693,263
Art Unit: 3682

07/10/2007 AMENDMENT
Page: 7 of 7

Figs. 9-11 of Renee disclose a spiral follower body 50 which is mounted within a sleeve 57 and has multiple gripping pads 53 extending from one end of the sleeve. The body 50 comprises so-called prong-springs 52 which mount the pads 53 on the upper ends thereof. The sleeve 57 creates a lever action of the prong-springs 52 which resiliently forces the pads 53 against the helical surfaces of wand 15a. The result of this lever action and the cooperation between the prong-springs 52 and the sleeve 57 is discussed at column 6, lines 34-38 of Renee '398:

"... the cooperation between the prong-springs and the sleeve 57 maintains the pads 53 sufficiently engaged with the helical surfaces to effect rotation of wand 15a when the operator is moved upwardly or downwardly."

The explicit cooperation between the sleeve and the prong-spring-mounted pads that makes the pads rotate the wand when the operator is moved upward and downward, implicitly and necessarily prevents the pads 53 and the associated body 50 from rotating within the sleeve 57.

In contrast to the non-rotatable construction and operation of Renee's body 50 and sleeve 57, each of applicant's independent claims 1, 2 and 3 specifies applicant's rotatable follower/collar and handle combination and dependent claim 6/3 incorporates applicant's rotatable follower/collar and handle combination. Renee does not teach or suggest such a rotatable combination. The examiner's interpretation of Renee appears to be based upon hindsight, using applicant's teachings as a guide to interpret Renee.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 2, 3 and 6/3 under 35 U.S.C. 102 based upon Renee are requested.

5. Summary and Action Requested

Entry of this Amendment is requested. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112 and 35 U.S.C. 102 are requested. Allowance of claims 1-3 and 6 is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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